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ABSTRACT

As opportunities expand for postsecondary education, career options, and life choices for people with disabilities, those who counsel and advise students with disabilities must become aware of the facts. Increasing numbers of students with disabilities are pursuing education after high school. One study reports a threefold increase in the incidence of college freshmen with disabilities between 1978 and 1985. Anecdotal data suggest that this estimate is low. Legislation in the 1970s led to dramatic changes in physical, programmatic, and attitudinal access on American campuses; increasing numbers and types of schools now accept and accommodate students with disabilities. It is, however, the responsibility of the disabled student to request adaptations and to manage the necessary accommodations. Counselors have a role to play in helping disabled students and their parents to learn how to take this responsibility and be effective self-advocates. Project HEATH (Higher Education and the Handicapped) has a resource center which serves as an information exchange about education and training opportunities after high school for persons with disabilities. Project HEATH offers publications to help counselors advise students with disabilities in the areas of financial aid, vocational rehabilitation services, classroom access, testing, and opportunities for persons with specific disabilities. Expanding opportunities allow counselors and students with disabilities to put their disabilities in perspective when selecting a college. (NB)

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HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE: ADVISING DISABLED STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

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Times have changed! Now in the 1980's opportunities are expanding for postsecondary education, career options, and life choices for people with disabilities. Legislation, such as the Education of the Handicapped Act (especially PL 94-142), the Rehabilitation Act (especially Section 504), and the Vocational Education Act and amendments, plus the growing awareness of disabled people and their advocates require that stereotypes be reexamined. American schools are making great progress towards including qualified disabled students in education and training after high school. Those who counsel and advise students with disabilities must become aware of the facts.

Numbers of Disabled College Students Have Increased

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Indeed increasing numbers of students with disabilities are pursuing education after high school. Handicapped or disabled students are those with "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities," according to the Federal government in the Regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. While there are pathetically few national statistics to confirm this fact, there is one annual study which does. The **American Freshman: National Norms** (an annual publication of the American Council on Education) reports that between 1978 and 1985 there has been a threefold increase in the

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incidence of freshmen who state that they have a disability. The figure for 1985 indicates that 7.7% of full time/first time freshmen are disabled. Since 1966 the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) has been an annual national normative longitudinal study of American freshmen sponsored by the American Council on Education and the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Los Angeles. Each year full time/first time freshmen at a stratified sample of institutions are asked about 50 questions covering such topics as number of colleges one applied to, source of money for college, parents' occupation, political ideas, and intended fields of study. In 1978 questions about handicap/disability were introduced and have been retained ever since.

American Freshman:

National Norms

	1978	1985
All Disabilities	**2.7%**	**7.7%**
The following represent the per cent of **All Disabilities**		
Hearing Imp.	11.0	11.7
Speech	4.0	3.9
Visual	37.4	27.3
Orthop	18.1	11.7
Learn Dis.	**4.7**	**14.3**
Health related	– N.R.	15.6
Other	16.7	15.6

The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1985 can be ordered by prepaying $8.50 to the Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

Anecdotal data informs us that that is really a low estimate of disabled persons on college campuses. It does not include the many part time students, particularly in community colleges, nor does it include

those studying at career schools, vocational-technical centers or other postsecondary educational entities. But it is indicative of the fact that disabled students are taking their places on American college campuses. The larger public universities report serving between 300 and 400 disabled students annually. Community colleges estimate that about 20% of their students are disabled. The figures are much smaller at private/independent institutions, but their dedication to focusing on the individual student often make private colleges an attractive choice for a student with a disability. Unfortunately there is no national data at all which tells us how these freshmen fare. We do not know how many graduate or go on to further study or how many become employed after their postsecondary educational experience.

Numbers of Schools with Disabled Students Have Increased

Increasing numbers and types of schools now accept and accommodate students with disabilities. A brief historical note will show us how far we have come. There have been some handicapped students in college for years, but until recently only the academically brilliant and socially advantaged have been able to overcome the handicap of a functional limitation such as vision, mobility, or hearing to participate in college. Deaf and severely hearing impaired persons were the first group of disabled students recognized by Congress to receive a special college education. In 1864 President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation which chartered the first college for deaf students — later called Gallaudet College. Congressional action has continued to single out deaf and hearing impaired students for special postsecondary education in a variety of ways, but later stipulated that, except for Gallaudet which continues to be the nation's only college

for the deaf, education for deaf students should take place in the regular campus setting.

Following World War II, in 1947 at the University of Illinois, Champagne/Urbana, Professor Timothy J. Nugent and a group of paraplegic veterans established the first program which made it possible for individuals with severe permanent physical disabilities to attend the university and benefit from all experiences that are part of university life and common to all students. Nugent's program of integrating disabled students into the regular activities became the prototype for the handful of other programs which were developed during the 50's and 60's. During that period a number of new campuses were built across the country to accommodate the expanding college population and several institutions incorporated physical access into their plans. These schools, many in the mid-west and California, became the core of postsecondary schools in which mobility impaired students enrolled and the model for many institutions to follow in the years to come.

In the mid '70's it was the enactment of legislation indicated at the beginning of this paper which led to the dramatic change in physical, programmatic, and attitudinal access on American campuses. Most pertinent to institutions of higher education was the promulgation in 1977 of Regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which states, "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely by reason of a handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Growth of Postsecondary Education for Disabled Students

An indication of the growth of postsecondary education for disabled persons is the fact that the initial survey by HEATH of the nation's 3,000 colleges and universities in 1978 revealed that about 30 had experience serving a significant number and variety of disabled students on their campuses. Today the HEATH Campus Resource File contains similar information from over 750 institutions including trade, technical, and career schools and other postsecondary training entities. A recent study of accredited trade and technical schools prepared for HEATH revealed that over half of them have been training disabled students for years!

Another indication of the current prevalence of access on campus is the 1986 edition of the **Directory of College Facilities and Services for the Handicapped**, published by Oryx Press. The 1986 (second edition) includes over 2,300 institutions which accept and provide at least some accommodations for students with handicaps. There are other specialized directories such as the 1986 **Directory of College and Career Programs for Deaf Students** (Gallaudet Press) which includes over 150 entries and several other directories currently list between 300 and 400 4-year colleges for learning disabled students.

It is interesting to note that those who are blind or visually impaired have been consistently the largest group of disabled persons in college. The organizations of and for the blind have done an excellent job of preparing their students to participate in college and no directory of colleges for blind students has emerged.

The profession of disabled student service personnel has also grown during the last decade. The Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education (AHSSPPE) was established in 1977 as

the professional organization for those active in the area of counseling, coordination and providing support services to disabled college students. In 1978 there were a handful of charter members and now AHSSPPE has over 650 members throughout the nation and abroad.

Range of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The range of accommodations which assist disabled students to succeed in postsecondary programs is very broad and routinely available upon request at most colleges and universities. Examples include relocating of classes to accessible space and testing with extended time, providing support services such as interpreters, notetakers, and personal care attendants, use of technological equipment such as talking calculators, Braille typewriters, and voice operated computer terminals. With such assistance, disabled students are enrolling and succeeding in a variety of settings of their choice alongside their nondisabled peers.

Crucial for students with disabilities to understand, however, is that in postsecondary educational settings, it is the responsibility of the disabled person (and/or advocate) to request adaptations and to manage the accommodations necessary for him or her to have that access. Counselors have a role to play in helping disabled students and their parents to learn how to take this responsibility and be effective self advocates. As student service personnel have become more active and increasing numbers of colleges have developed policies and procedures for providing access many disabled students will find that little or no additional accommodation is necessary.

How HEATH Can Help You

The American Council on Education, the umbrella organization for colleges and universities in America, has provided leadership since 1977 through Project HEATH (Higher Education and the Handicapped). The HEATH Resource Center, which is the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Handicapped Individuals, serves as an information exchange about education and training opportunities after high school for persons with disabilities. We have developed a variety of publications which can assist counselors and others who advise students with disabilities. These materials are free upon request and cover such topics as financial aid, vocational rehabilitation services, classroom and laboratory access, classroom testing, as well as opportunities for learning disabled, hearing impaired, severely handicapped and others. Our newsletter provides current information three times a year on topics of concern. This audience will be especially interested in one of our newest publications, **How to Choose a College: Guide for the Student with a Disability.** In addition to publications, HEATH staff are available to discuss individual questions by telephone or letter. Our toll-free telephone number, (800) 54 HEATH makes it easy for you to call — and we hear from many, many counselors and some of the students they are working with.

Because times have changed and opportunities are expanding disabled students must put their disability in perspective. Selecting a college (or job, or goal in life) based solely or primarily on disability is to do one's self a great injustice. Surely disability-related special needs must be considered, but those needs are just one part of the much larger list of considerations to be made, about which you as counselors routinely advise your students.